

Key Sector Risks – Our Perspective

January 2013



Uniac, the HE Sector's leading internal audit specialists are undertaking reviews in three highly topical areas:

Cyber Security	UKBA	Assurance Frameworks
<p>Cyber Security threats are an increasing concern for the Sector. Recent attacks have led to internal systems being compromised and user account details (with passwords) being published on-line. Effective and balanced management of the risks needs to be sponsored from the top of institutions and conducted in a way that recognises the unique nature of academic establishments.</p> <p>As a first step, there needs to be an understanding of the primary intellectual property assets and where they are held – only then can consideration be given to the current and expected levels of control. With assessments focussed on risks to the institution, control frameworks such as those identified by the Centre of National Infrastructure can be applied.</p>	<p>UKBA compliance (particularly Tier 4) is now included within most University risk registers. While guidelines have changed and will, no doubt, change again the need to be compliant and prepared for a UKBA visit is of continued importance.</p> <p>Institutions need to have a robust framework in place covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• governance and management oversight• CAS processes and record keeping• Pre-enrolment and enrolment processes• Attendance monitoring and engagement• Reporting to the UKBA <p>Universities need to have (and need to demonstrate that they have) appropriate processes in place that are consistently applied and are capable of providing up to date information and records, sometimes at very short notice.</p>	<p>There is increased pressure on governors and senior managers to understand and manage the risks in a Sector that is going through a considerable period of change.</p> <p>While risk registers have been an established reference point for a number of years, broader assurance frameworks can also be extremely beneficial. By taking each of the risks in the register and articulating both the actual approaches to managing the risks and who is responsible, an exercise can be undertaken which identifies who is providing assurance that the action is effective.</p> <p>This not only highlights risks where there may be potential exposures, i.e. no assurances are being received on the management of risks, but also areas of duplication.</p> <p>The work is particularly useful for Boards and their Committees in ensuring resources are deployed efficiently and there is a joined up approach to risk, management and assurance.</p>

Why Uniac?

- We spend all our time helping Universities manage their risks, meaning we can hit the ground running
- We understand the Sector, institutional objectives and constraints, so we can ground our recommendations with an appreciation of the context
- We have carried out reviews on each of the areas outlined above at a number of our member institutions, meaning that we can suggest approaches based on relevant experience and best practice

Would you like our assistance?

We would be more than happy to talk to you about any of the above topics or about internal audit services generally. Please contact: Richard Young, email: ryoung@uniac.co.uk, tel: 0161 247 2959.